



May 2026
Number 196

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Dedicated to the preservation and continued airworthiness of
Vista and AESL Airtourer and derivative series aircraft

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Articles for inclusion in the Newsletter should be submitted directly to the Editor at the contacts listed above. Contributions and or advertisements for the next issue need to be received by 21 June 2026. Advertisements are free for Association members.

Disclaimer

The views expressed are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Publishers, the Airtourer Association or the Airtourer Co-operative Ltd.

Cover: CT-4 c/n 242 partly constructed at NZAero’s Hamilton factory. Photo taken earlier this year by Bryan Greenfield. Soon, hopefully!



From the President

by **Deb Evans** (Vista Airtourer 115, VH-IOF)

Welcome to Autumn, it is hard to believe the year is nearly half over. Your committee has been working diligently with regards to the 2026 Convention/AGM and the fuel issues that are concerning us all.

After speaking with the locals, including Pat Peak, Pat can't wait to see everyone. We made the decision to go ahead with the convention/AGM. We have a wonderful guest speaker, fun day at the Temora Aviation Museum with another instalment in our Pilot Proficiency Program, navigation trial and ending the weekend with a Chinese meal on the Sunday night for those who will be staying.



Temora is one of those underrated country towns that surprises people once they actually stop there. The standout is the Temora Aviation Museum — it's not just static displays, they regularly fly historic warbirds like Supermarine Spitfire and CAC Wirraway. If you catch one of their flying days, it's genuinely special. Then there's the Temora Rural Museum, which gives a really hands-on look at farming history — lots of big machinery and local stories that make the area's past feel real rather than staged. If you're into quirky stops, the Temora Railway Station area and the town's aviation-themed streets add a bit of character, and the Lake Centenary is a good spot to relax or walk.

It's also got that classic regional vibe — decent bakeries, friendly locals, and not overly polished, which is part of the charm.

Happy 93rd Birthday to Harry Couzins — founder and life member. Thank you for your dedication, vision, and lasting contribution. Wishing you a fantastic day and many more to come!

I'm looking forward to seeing you in Temora.

Smooth landings

Deb



2026 Convention and AGM

Friday 22 May to Sunday 26 May 2026, Temora, NSW

- Museum Tour
- Fighter simulator
- Convention Dinner in the Museum Hangar
- Guest speaker: Air Vice Marshall Mark Skidmore AM
- Formation flying practice
- Navigation exercise to Cootamundra
- Guided museum tour
- Annual General Meeting
- Pilot Proficiency Programme



Latest details on the Association Web site (Upcoming Events).

See the [Airtourer Association Web site](#) for booking details and accommodation options at **Skylodge**, Koreela Park Motor Inn and GoldTerra Motor Inn. **When booking at Skylodge, you must mention you are with the Airtourers.**

[REGISTER ONLINE AT THE ASSOCIATION WEB SITE](#)



THE LATEST NEWS



100 Squadron to retire 077

The Royal Australian Air Force announced in January that it is withdrawing eight heritage aircraft following a comprehensive review of technical and airworthiness factors at 100 Squadron.

Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Stephen Chappell, said the review was essential to balancing heritage preservation with operational safety.

“While withdrawing aircraft is never easy, this step ensures we preserve aviation history responsibly. By transferring these aircraft to museums and heritage organisations, their stories of service and innovation will remain accessible for future generations.”

The withdrawn aircraft – DH-115 Vampire, Gloster Meteor, Cessna A-37B Dragonfly, Ryan STM-S2, English Electric Canberra, CA-27 Sabre, CT4A, and RE8 – will be transitioned with dignity. Five aircraft originally transferred from Temora Aviation Museum will return there, while the remaining three will be considered for static display at approved institutions. 077 is destined for the RAAF Museum, Point Cook.



Air Force will continue to operate 11 heritage aircraft: the Mustang, Harvard, Winjeel, two Tiger Moths, Sopwith Pup, Hudson, Spitfire Mk8, Spitfire Mk16, Boomerang and Wirraway.



Buy, Swap and Sell

Don't let your unneeded Airtourer and CT-4 bits and pieces collect dust! Put them up for sale here! Or do you need a particular part or instrument? Ask here! Why not try to swap for something you no longer need? Or is it time to re-home your aircraft, or are you looking to buy? Buy, Swap and Sell is your Airtourer and CT-4 marketplace! It's free to advertise... just send your ad to editor@airtourer.asn.au.

Victa Airtourer 115 - VH-RQL

Serial number 84, middle of the Australian Victas built in 1964.

TTIS 8369. Low empty weight 502 kg. MR to 20-6-2026.

115HP Lycoming O-235 smooth running with good compressions on condition. New baffles.

- 2 x ICOM IC-A210 radios.
- 1 x GTX 327 Transponder factory reconditioned 2025.
- 1 x new DG.



Passenger side iPad mount. New LED landing and nav lights.

New master cylinder and brake gaskets. One of two Victas with wheel spats.

Original factory paint scheme 4/10 but repainted tail plane and elevator 10/10.

Good canopy seals and new studded Pumpkin Head cover - a reliably waterproof aircraft for outdoor parking.

Contact Robin Hilliard 0418 414 341

(Don't worry we'll still be around, upsizing to a CT4)



Short Stay Accommodation at Yarrowonga

Airtourer Association members who have passed through Yarrowonga in the last couple of years will know that Angela (and Tony) have been busy building two-level accommodation into their hangar. Well, it's finished, and The Aeropartment is now available for short-term accommodation! Stay on the airfield, in a very comfortable and well-appointed apartment, with your Airtourer/Airtrainer visible in the hangar through the glass doors! Booking is done online, and if you are a current financial member of the Association, you can use one of the three codes AIRTOURER, AIRTRAINER or AIRCRUISER to get a 20% discount! More at <https://aeropartment.lodgify.com/>



For Sale: Victa 100 Muffler

Brand new Victa 100 muffler, part number 42125/1 for sale. \$400.

Contact David Wearne, dwearne@exemail.com.au or 0408322398.

For Sale: Propeller

Propeller - original 115 McCauley fixed pitch propeller with 300 hours of life before requiring refurbishment. Contact Ray Abernethy, rayabernethy@gmail.com, 0409 411 940.



Advertise here! Buy, Swap and Sell advertisements for Association members are free!



For Sale: VH-RQH Airtourer 150 Fixed Pitch

The rebuild project is almost complete and will be sold with maintenance release. Reluctant sale due to health and hangarage challenges.

Contact Rod Swallow 0427 521 803



Victa Airtourer 115 VH-MVF



We are selling MVF! Aussie built 115, serial number 19. MVF was a demonstrator for Victa and was on static display at Sydney Royal Easter Show in 1963.

- TTIS: 8378.6 hrs.
- Engine TSO: 1959.5
- Prop TSO: 341.8

Call or text Mark Barnett for details Ph: 0400 051 528

For Sale: Tyres and Seat

3 only 500x5 brand new old stock tyres suitable for Airtourers.

Seats are original in excellent condition - vinyl only requires dusting off and cleaning due to storage.

Contact Ray Abernethy,
rayabernethy@gmail.com, 0409 411 940.



Wanted: Photo of Bill Kelly and others

Doug Stott is looking for a photo of former Treasurer Bill Kelly.

Bill owned VH-TWG in the 1980s and used to stay in Darwin during the dry season. He later held some fly-ins at his servo in Bannockburn. He was the one that painted the Airtourer Association logo on the roof. If you have a head and shoulders picture of Bill, can you please send it to Doug at djm.s@bigpond.com please?

Also, does anyone have photos of Earl Johnson, Frank Rogers, Gerry Walsh and/or Barbara Main? Earl was a solicitor in Taree and owner who helped set up the Association and write the first constitution.. Frank was a draftsman with Victa and you can see his name/sig on many of the original drawings. Gerry was an engineer with Victa and worked with Alan Wood.

Tamworth - the story continues...

Annette and Mick Summers had a special reason to enjoy the Tamworth fly-in... the both used to work in the BAe facility! They had been looking forward to bringing CT-4B VH-YCH down for the weekend, but a fuel leak thwarted them. Nonetheless, they did get to see YCH's old wing on display!



Roy Riddel, RAAF

Part one: To War

by **Peter Roberts and Judy Riddel** (originally published in SITREP Magazine, March 2023, reproduced with permission)

Roy Gordon Riddel was born in Brisbane on 9 June 1919 to Morningside Shire clerk John Riddel and his wife Gertrude. He found a love of flying in 1931 when his father took him to Mascot for a flight in a Genairco. In his youth he also enjoyed swimming, tennis and football, and in his final years at school at the Church of England Grammar School played inside centre for the first XV. Education was followed by employment as a Bank Clerk with the Commonwealth Bank in 1937, and commerce studies at Queensland University. In July 1939, not long after his 20th birthday, and with war clouds gathering, Roy enlisted in the Australian Military Forces. He joined the 9/49 Battalion on the 13 July, Service number 404215. There after followed endless route marches and parades. By April the following year he had had enough. Roy and others decided that if they were going to go to war, it would be sitting down! Half way through one of these marches, Roy and his fellow conspirators marched off to the local railway station, dumped their equipment and went away to join the RAAF. On the 16 August 1940 he became an Aircraftman 2nd Class, RAAF, Service number 404355.

Roy began his Air Force training on Course No. 4 at No. 2 Initial Training School Bradfield Park two days later, then further training at No. 2 Elementary Flying Training School at Archerfield with the new rank of Leading Aircraftman. On 16 December 1940, he began his final training on Course No. 5 at No. 3 Service Flying Training School in Amberley, passing out on 6 April 1941 with his wings, an assessment of 'Above Average', a promotion to Sergeant, and a posting to the RAF in England. He embarked for England on the SS Sarpendon in late May.



There was more training for Roy in England. On 5 September he went to 57 Operational Training Unit (OTU) based at Hawarden, flying war-weary Spitfires. This was where he had his first flight in a



Spitfire. Roy recalled that 'you just sat in the cockpit and learned the layout. Then they put a blindfold on you, and you put your hand on the instruments as the instructor called them out.' If you passed, you were allowed to fly the plane. His second flight in a Spitfire, a Mark I (XO-A), was a formation flying exercise, to be followed by camera gunnery with another Spitfire. As he was orbiting the base at 2,000 feet, setting up for the gunnery exercise, the engine began to shudder. Choosing discretion over valour, he broke off and decided to land. Unfortunately, the engine had developed a glycol leak and stopped altogether on his downwind approach, issuing clouds of white smoke. He quickly changed his approach to crosswind. The undercarriage was down and being of the early, pump operated variety, Roy decided not to retract it. While attempting to clear the wires next to the railway line, the Spitfire decided it had had enough and stalled from about 40 feet, crash landing near 48 Maintenance Unit. Roy suffered a cracked coccyx and injured toe. The Spitfire had the starboard undercarriage leg push up through the wing, while the port leg made a large dent in the other wing. When he saw Flight Lieutenant James 'Ginger' Lacey, one of his instructors, approaching, Roy was sure he'd be scrubbed from the course. "You okay?" Lacey

inquired laconically. Although he must have been in pain, Roy was able to assure him he was. "That's good, I'm glad to hear you're alright" said Lacey and nodded at the wrecked Spitfire "This thing has been nothing but trouble. It's about time it stopped for keeps."

The pump action undercarriage retraction of the early Spitfires was a real trial for novice and experienced pilots alike. Typically, the planes would 'porpoise' through the air after take-off, pitching up and down as the pilot pumped the lever vigorously to retract the undercarriage, inevitably taking skin off the pilots knuckles. On one such occasion, while taking off in formation with an instructor, Roy also inadvertently slid sideways and bumped the instructors wingtip. The instructors voice came calmly through his headphones. "I don't mind flying with you Riddel, but please don't hit me again." Having completed his training at 57 OTU, Roy was promoted to the rank of Sergeant Pilot. On 21 October he was posted to 66 Squadron, RAF, operating out of Perranporth in Cornwall, the ORB noting his arrival three days later. One of the first things Roy did was to purchase a bicycle but this was soon upgraded to an MG sportscar, for the grand sum of 25 pounds.

66 Squadron had the distinction of being the first RAF Squadron to undertake an offensive daylight sortie by Fighter Command aircraft since Dunkirk. Some six months earlier, with a mixture of Mk I and Mk II Spitfires, the Squadron had taken off from Biggin Hill and ranged through France from Dieppe to beyond Paris, shooting at targets of opportunity. When Roy joined them the Commanding Officer was Squadron Leader Hubert 'Dizzy' Allen, and the Squadron was operating long-range Spitfire Mk II's. Roy also met then Flight Lieutenant Percy 'Laddie' Lucas, a fellow Squadron pilot also fresh out of OTU training, with whom he established a friendship that would last beyond the war.





The long range Spitfire Mk II's were not popular with the pilots. The Spitfire had originally been developed as a defensive fighter, to intercept aircraft over Britain, so consequently range was not a priority. At the conclusion of the Battle of Britain, this became a problem as the RAF went on the offensive in 1941. In an attempt to rectify the problem, the Spitfire Mk II Long Range (LR) was created by attaching a fixed fuel tank of approximately 40 gallons capacity to the port wing. These aircraft were allocated to 66, 118 and 152 Squadrons but were not popular. It extended the time to climb to 15,000 feet by almost 2 minutes

and the maximum speed was reported to have been reduced by 13 mph. Roy recalled that the extra tank 'caused the aircraft to swing like blazes on take-off and slowed us dreadfully'.

By now much of 66 Squadron operations concerned convoy and interception patrols with the occasional bomber escort duty. On 1 and 25 November the Squadron flew escort to Blenheims attacking Morlaix, though Roy wasn't rostered to fly on either of these sorties. On 28 November Roy and 'Laddie' Lucas provided an escort for the C-in-C when he travelled to Fairwood and two days later he flew his first operational sortie, a convoy patrol, also with Lucas. 66 Squadron moved to Portreath in mid-December. For Roy, most of December was fairly mundane, mainly flying convoy

patrols, though these patrols weren't always mundane. It may well have been on the 17 December, when Roy was flying a convoy patrol with Captain Claisse, that he had reason to be thankful for the extra range from the additional fuel tank on his Spitfire Mk II LR. He had just finished a long patrol from Plymouth to the Scilly Isles and was about to return to base from the western end of the run. For some reason, he set 'red on black' (meaning he was flying on the opposite compass course to the one intended) and started to head further west out into the Atlantic, bound for America. He only became aware of what he had done when he realised that the Operations Controllers voice had faded out. The adrenalin began to pump when he also realised he barely had enough fuel to get back. The fuel gauges were close to zero as he landed and the engine stopped as he taxied to dispersals. The tanks were dry.

On the 18 December the Squadron again provided bomber escort, this time for an attack on the German battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, and the heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen berthed in Brest, France, but again Roy missed out on participating in this action. Two Messerschmitts were seen but they didn't interfere.



The following day he flew two uneventful interception patrols. Roy got his opportunity for action on the 30 December when the Squadron was detailed to escort bombers for another attack on the German ships in Brest. The Squadron ORB doesn't record details but Roy recalled squirting at a couple of 109's, then on the return journey his engine was hit by ground fire. He managed to limp back to Portreath with a badly overheating engine. He considered landing on the nearby beach but at the last moment decided he would be able to make it back to the airfield.

It was a fortuitous choice in more ways than one; the tortured engine finally stopped as he was landing. That night in the pub a soldier asked who the lucky Spitfire pilot was that landed with a stopped engine. Roy piped up "Oh, that was me". "You must have been a bit worried?" came the reply. "Not really" said Roy, "I was going to land it on the beach if I had to". "Just as well you didn't" said the soldier, "We've just mined it."

Life off operations provided time to relax a little and the local pubs received regular visits from the Base personnel. After a night out at one of the pubs, trying to impress one of the WAAF's, Roy managed to drive his MG into a pond. The car wouldn't start so he trekked back to the pub for help. Early the next morning the Base sentries were greeted with the unusual sight of seven people, three WAAF's and four pilots, pushing a soggy MG on to the base while another WAAF steered!

On the last day of December, Roy flew escort to Hudsons, looking for a dinghy, and the routine of convoy patrols continued into January 1942, with the usual interruptions from bad weather and lack of aircraft. On the 9 January Roy flew an interception patrol with Pilot Officer Daddo-Langlois but nothing was seen. The main excitement came towards the end of the month when a Squadron patrol intercepted a Ju 88 but it escaped into cloud.

At this time 66 Squadron came off operations as it embarked on training which continued into February. This included aircraft inspection, formation flying, and gunnery; Roy found he was one of the better shots in the Squadron. Poor weather continued to hamper flying and contributed to an accident by Roy on 6 February. After flying over the weather at 30,000 feet in Spitfire II LR (P8097), according to the Squadron ORB, Roy forgot to lower the flaps when landing due to persistent haziness and overshot. Roy recalled a slightly different scenario. The exercise was to facilitate a radar check by flying back and forth across Plymouth. When his main fuel tanks began to run low he attempted to switch across to the extra tank but it refused to feed. With no choice but to land, he descended through the cloud and found himself surrounded by Tiger Moths, and with the sudden strain of having to negotiate a path through the trainers forgot to lower his flaps, ending up nose first in a stone wall.

On 12 February life was rudely interrupted by the Luftwaffe when a Dornier bombed and strafed the airfield. This would later be identified as a diversionary attack to cover the escape of the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen which had left Brest the day before. Roy was standing with fellow Australian, Sergeant Bill Norman, as



the Dornier attacked. He watched with fascination as the Base defences went into action while Bill dived for cover into a nearby ditch, emerging after the attack covered in mud.

Bill was one of several Australian pilots serving with 66 Squadron who Roy grew close to. He had trained with Roy at 57 OTU and was posted to 66 Squadron at the same time. Roy recalled that on one occasion when they were flying together Bill managed to accidentally jettison his canopy. He asked Roy to fly up alongside to see if there was any damage to the tail of his plane. It was fine but Roy couldn't help chiding him. "You're a silly bugger!" That night they took some WAAFs to a local pub and one recognised them. "Oh, did you hear about the little problem?" "Yes" she said, "I'm a controller and overheard the lot, and the Sector Controller heard you both too. It was the only time during the whole shift that we saw him smile."

Later that day, the 12 February, the Squadron was ordered to Warmwell to again escort bombers for another attack on Brest. Unfortunately they arrived too late to participate in the mission but the following day they covered destroyers undertaking torpedo attacks off the Dutch coast, 'A' and 'B' Flights alternating cover without incident. Training continued at Warmwell and on 21 February the Squadron returned to Portreath, becoming operational again on 23 February.

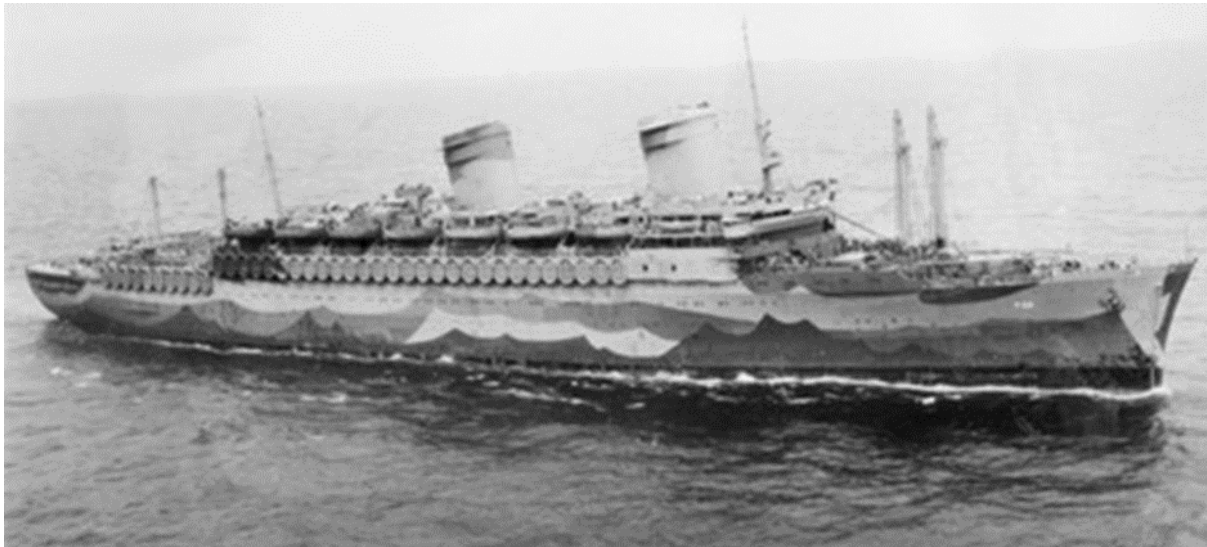
66 Squadron began to receive new Spitfire Vcs in early March to replace their Mark II LR Spitfires. While the Mark Vc was considered satisfactory, initial opinion was that it was slower at low level but had a better rate of climb. Some of the training at this stage included night flying and on 4 March, Roy flew a night reconnaissance with Flight Lieutenant Friendship. Scrambles on 8 and 9 March were without result. Poor weather and a lack of aircraft continued to hamper operations, but an 'inspection' of the local brewery, Redruth Brewery Ltd, on 16 March helped to alleviate the inaction. The Squadron ORB recorded that 'a good time was had by all'; apparently assisted by sampling of the produce. The ORB also records that towards the end of March opinion had changed on the new Spitfire Vc; it had much better performance at height, climbed well and gained speed quickly in a dive, but the engine was difficult to cut 'when shoving the nose down.' For Roy, March was spent on more routine convoy patrols and interception patrols; eleven of the former, five of the latter, with three of the convoy patrols in the last week of March in the new Spitfire Vc.

With the Japanese advancing on Australia, the RAAF was in desperate need of experienced pilots and Roy was one of several Australian pilots ordered home. Sadly, one of the last things Roy did in England was to attend the funeral of his good mate Bill Norman on 30 March at Illogan Church. Six days earlier, as part of their training, Bill had been practising dusk landings and night flying with the CO, Squadron Leader Cremin. It is believed they collided and crashed at about 22:05 near St. Erth. They were both killed.

Officially repatriated on 7 April 1942, Roy embarked on the SS Letitia at Glasgow for the journey home. Other Australian pilots joining him included sergeants Frank Shelley, Keith Gamble, Ian Loudon and Jeff Wilkinson, and officers Dick Holt, Mark Sheldon and Raife Cowan. The sergeants were soon reminded of their place in service



life. While they waited for their accommodation, a large group of German navy POWs, with their guard, were led up the gangplank and sent to cabin accommodation, followed by a contingent of Canadian Army Warrant Officers and then the Australian pilot officers. The sergeant pilots were last on board and ordered down into the hold where they were to rig their own hammocks. The hold turned out to be dark and damp with no amenities or ablutions, and it leaked during the voyage, forcing them to stow their kit in their hammocks. A solitary corvette made up their escort; they hoped the U-boats had been ordered away because of the German POWs on board! The only cigarettes were 'Cape to Cairo', which someone dubbed as 'the scrapings from Cape to Cairo', and the food was no better, but there was beer.



Disembarking at Halifax, they were put on a train to Montreal. The officers were sent to the sleepers, while the sergeants were directed to the last 'Third Class' carriage. With a six hundred mile trip ahead of them, they found it full of native Indian families and hard wooden seats. Complaints to the Transport Officer were met with the threat of a charge, until Dick Holt came to their rescue. Through Dick's persuasion, an additional carriage was added to the train which at least had comfortable seats that could also be used as beds. They were billeted in Montreal for three weeks, officers to a hotel and sergeants to cold huts at the Dorval ferry pool. Life improved somewhat a few days later when they left the huts for lodgings in a hotel.

The overland journey to San Francisco was more comfortable for the sergeants with reasonable billets and when they embarked on the USS West Point (AP23) for the final leg home via Wellington New Zealand, all men were accommodated in cabins. They sailed into Port Phillip Bay on 4 June 1942 to the welcome sight of Melbourne, Australia. One can only imagine their feelings as they steamed into port, home at last to do their bit defending their homeland from the threat of an advancing enemy. They were a bit puzzled though by the lack of tugs coming out to meet them. The American crew were left to deftly bring the ship up to the wharf in Port Melbourne. As they watched the crew descending ladders to moor the ship, they spied a group of



wharfies sitting around on the docks and yelled at them to “give the Yanks a hand”, only to be met with a cranky reply, “We’re on strike!”

Welcome home chaps!

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- <https://www.fleetairarm.com/history-of-channel-dash.aspx>
-

Photos:

- Roy Riddel, RAAF, Service no. 404355 (Courtesy Riddel Family Collection)
- Roy Riddel with Spitfire Mk II LR, P8131, ‘LUTON II’, 66 Squadron, England (Courtesy of Riddel Family Collection)
- The transport ship USS WEST POINT (AP23) which brought Roy and several other Australian pilots back to Australia in 1942 to fight the approaching Japanese. Copyright expired, Accession No: 302771
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C241380>



Calendar of Events

16-17 May 2026	Wings Over Shellharbour	https://wingsovershellharbour.com.au/
17 May 2026	David Hack Classic	Toowoomba. https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1526225
22-25 May 2026	Airtourer Convention and AGM	Temora
10 June 2026	Zoom Members Social Meet-up	Check your email for details
26-28 June 2026	Brass Monkeys Formation Clinic	Toowoomba, QLD. Contact matthandley308@gmail.com
12 August 2026	Zoom Members Social Meet-up	Check your email for details
9-11 October 2026	President's Fly-in, Merimbula, NSW	Save the date and stay tuned for details. (Date TBC)
6-8 November	Formation Camp, Yarrawonga	To express interest, contact Tony Self at editor@airtourer.asn.au
2027	AGM and Convention, Broken Hill, NSW	Dates TBA
2027	President's Fly-in, Clare Valley, SA	Dates TBA

Notice of Airtourer Association AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Airtourer Association will be held at the Temora Aviation Museum Lecture Theatre, Temora Airport, NSW, at 09:30 AM on Sunday, 24th May 2026.

The meeting will be accessible via Zoom.

[Full details can be found on the Association Web Site.](#) (From the Home page, select *Upcoming Events*, then *Convention & AGM - Temora 2026*.)



Puzzle Time

From **John Wynn** (AESL Airtourer 150, VH-EQG, previously Victa 100 VH-MUJ)

Looking out my Airtourer canopy, where am I? **Answers on page xx.**

Photo 1. Clue: Heading north in the northern hemisphere



Photo 2. Clue: An active volcano then (1969) and now. Over 10,000 ft AMSL!

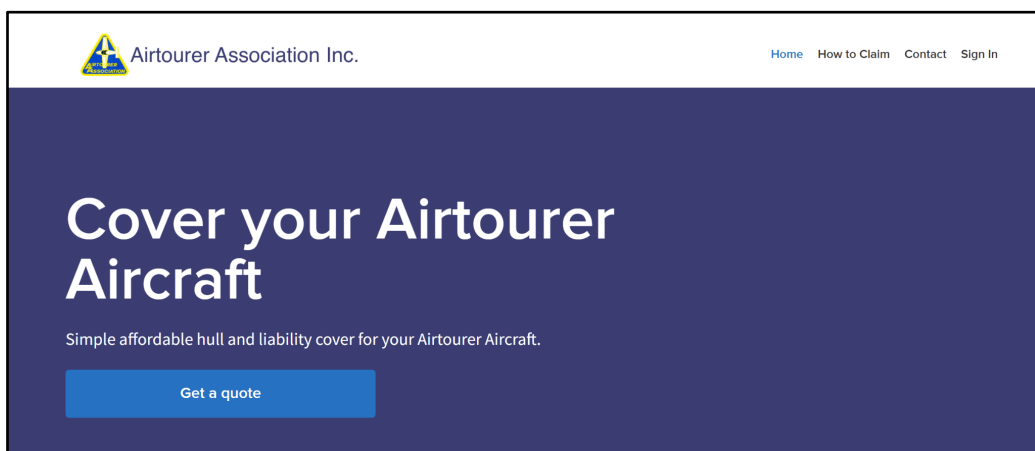


Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHcwi4yGOuI&t=200>

Aircraft Insurance for Members

Agile Insurance have put together a special package for Airtourer, Aircruiser and CT-4 Airtrainer owners. This arrangement is for current Airtourer Association members only. There is a good chance you can reduce your insurance costs with this offer, and there's absolutely no obligation. To get a quote, use your member details to log in to <https://airtourer.asn.au/> and then click the Agile link on the home page.



The screenshot shows the Airtourer Association Inc. website. The header includes the logo and navigation links: Home, How to Claim, Contact, Sign In. The main content area features a dark blue background with the text "Cover your Airtourer Aircraft" in large white font. Below this, it says "Simple affordable hull and liability cover for your Airtourer Aircraft." and a blue button labeled "Get a quote".



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Refurbishing/Converting Airtourer VH-TWG – A Brief History

by **Wes Madycki** (Victa Airtourer VH-TWG)

Back around 2006, I purchased a “dilapidated” Airtourer 115 from a friend who had intended to refurbish it, but he decided to let me have a go myself as an engineering project. As I was an Aeronautical Engineer who had studied under Henry Milicer at RMIT and had learned to fly on Airtourers back in the 60s, this was “obviously the way to go”. (Being, like Henry, of Polish nationality, a lot of fun was had by my classmates, at my expense, during lectures.)

The idea was to do the refurbishment under AESL SB 006, “altered” for an IO-320 Lycoming and a three bladed constant speed MT 12 propeller. A glass cockpit (among other niceties) was also on the cards. Naively, I figured it would only take a couple of years to complete the task as I had access to “enthusiastic” help as well as technical support and backup.

TWG work started out at West Sale Aerodrome, while the engine, wings and tailplane were removed and loaded onto a car trailer. During 2007, the fuselage was road transported to Archerfield Aerodrome (yes!) to Ian Aviation, a GA maintenance facility run by an Airtourer owner, Ian Calander. It stayed there until 2011, undergoing the necessary major structural modifications with me going up there from Sydney on numerous occasions to monitor progress, assist where possible, and answer any queries that arose on-site rather than via phone.

In 2011, I trailed it back to West Sale for a few weeks, primarily for basic painting, before trailering it (yet again) to the RVAC maintenance hangar at Moorabbin Aerodrome where it stayed until 2017.

Whilst there it underwent work on avionics, engine installation (including a new engine mount for the larger engine), fitting the three bladed prop, new instrument panel plus fitment of the Glass Instruments, dual toe brakes and dual throttle/pitch control quadrants, new wing tips with nav lights and strobes (plus strobe in the tail cone), Gascolator, CO Monitoring system, new windshield and canopy, metal fuel tank in lieu of the bladder tank, battery moved aft (for CG balance) with an external power receptacle, engine exhaust mods, plus a few other accessories. Some of these changes were not necessarily related to SB 006 so it was not a simple conversion (a bit over the top maybe). Everything was done to allow TWG to be able to be flown safely, albeit under a Special Permit To Fly.





I made quite a few trips from Sydney to Moorabbin during TWG's time at RVAC, staying a couple of weeks at a time. Whilst I was at RVAC, I had the good fortune to have the late Andy Morris drop by often to help out with advice even though he was working on his own Airtourer in a nearby hangar. Interestingly enough, he and I discussed the option of moving TWG to Kyneton where he and Mike Fisher (VH-BNV) were located, to complete the task. Notwithstanding his offer, I had the aircraft ferried back to West Sale where it had all started as I had solid and relevant connections there. Andy and I maintained contact whilst TWG was at West Sale.

By this time the work under SB 006 had been virtually completed except for some outstanding tasks such as final paint scheme, upholstery and other "minor" tasks. However, during the flight to West Sale, the pilot came across some issues for which he generated a *Flight Snag List*. That list included some items that turned out to be mishaps that had inadvertently occurred (unnoticed) during the work at RVAC. The Snag List was addressed progressively whilst TWG was at West Sale. I was also able to make the occasional trip from Sydney.

TWG was flown to Latrobe Valley Airport (under a SPTF) around November 2018 to address some of those items at East Coast Aviation. Whilst at Latrobe the canopy was refurbished and an "anti-theft" mixture control bracket was made up. It was also whilst at Latrobe that the Log Books went missing - which was quite scary - but fortunately they were located several years later. The moral of that is *keep the log books safely under lock and key!*

Unfortunately for me (and others no doubt) the Covid Pandemic hit in early 2020 and put paid to me being able to travel and complete the final tasks to get TWG recertified with a C of A, albeit at the time, in Experimental Category. The other issue



was that my wife had suffered a severe reaction to the Covid Vaccinations which also curtailed any travel plans I had and shifted my focus.



On the ferry flight from RVAC to Latrobe Valley, Nov 2018

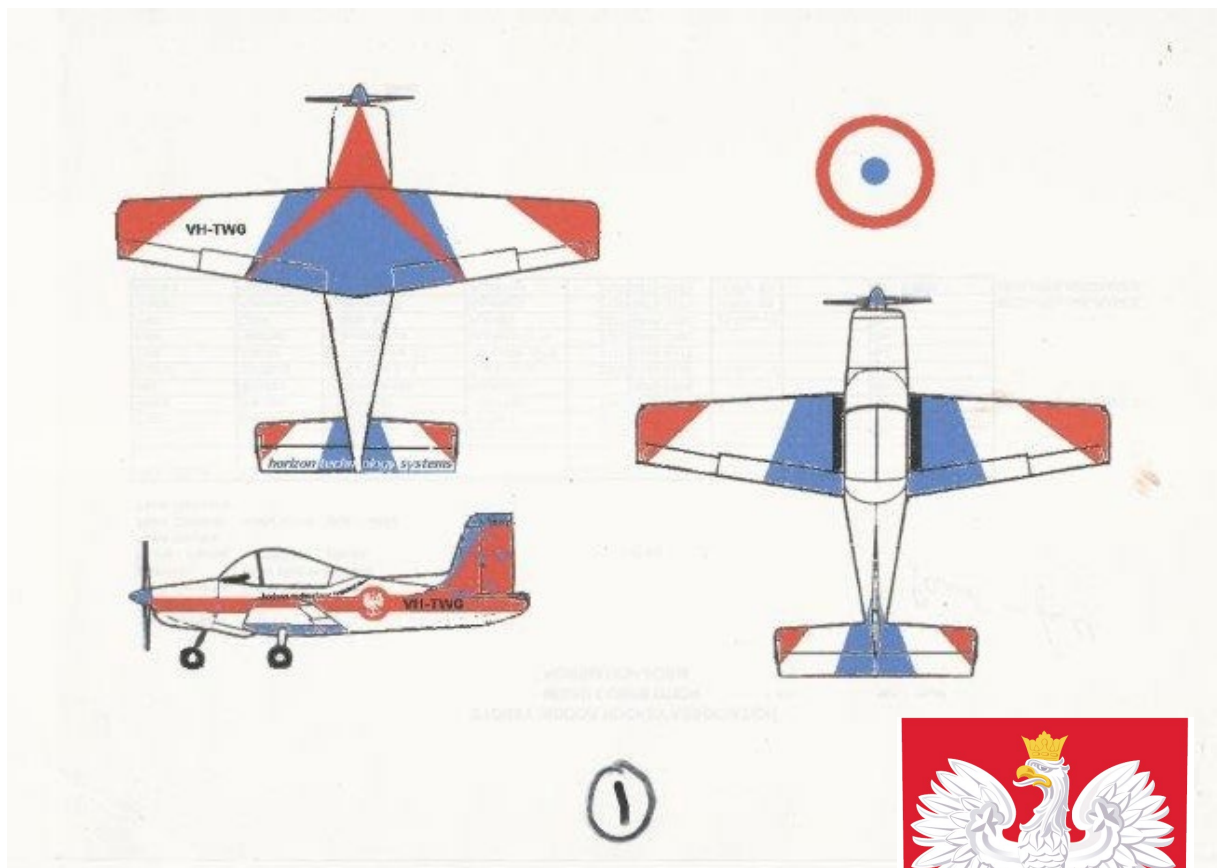
TWG languished at West Sale for the next four or so years during which time my friends - who had stood by me all this time - became overloaded in their business operations, severely restricting their availability. Finally after several frustrating years, my friend managed to get TWG into the Gipps Aero maintenance facility at Latrobe Valley Airport around July 2025 where she is currently undergoing work to get her operational and airworthy due to the rather large time lapse. The work is on an *ad hoc* basis as a fill in between more serious work at the facility. This suits me, cost wise. There now appears to be a light at the end of the tunnel and it is not “a train coming in the opposite direction” as the saying goes. I have my friend from West Sale to thank for that.



I must also acknowledge the help I got from Doug Stott over the past few years. Doug and I go back to the 60s when we came across each other during our flying training escapades. Doug has been a great back up for me during the recent problems I have been going through with TWG.

Doug was also instrumental in getting CASA to revoke its previous restriction on Airtourers undergoing SB 006 refurbishment being put into Experimental Category, finally realising that their actions were not valid. CASA will now allow work under SB 006 to be acceptable for Normal Category classification.

I must confess this whole process turned out to be quite expensive financially, emotionally and time wise, but it was challenging, exhilarating, and yes, satisfying. In hindsight, would I have started the process knowing what I know today? Maybe, but with a lot more caution and realistic planning.



Paint scheme with Polish crest detail



VH-TWG SNAG LIST

1. Rudder 'notchy' near centre of travel. Not noticeable on the ground due to nosewheel loads but very noticeable in the air. Something catching somewhere in the rudder circuit?
2. Oil pressure high 93-94 PSI. Should be more like 85-90 PSI in cruise. Needs adjusting. Also limit marks on EDM may be inaccurate - need to check with engine TCDS.
3. Left wing a little bit heavy in cruise. Needs the tab on the RH aileron bent down slightly.
4. Canopy pins not engaging properly. Rubber seal is too fat so that canopy will not go forward far enough to allow proper engagement of the pins.
5. Engine runs quite roughly. Big mag drop when L magneto position selected. Suggest all the plugs are pulled and cleaned.
6. Engine not making 2700 RPM at full power, even in the air. Prop needs adjusting.
7. There is a significant loss of power when alternate air is selected. Need to investigate.
8. Wheel brakes are not very effective. Suggest the mechanical advantage from the pull handle is increased to increase the brake pressure.
9. Trim flicks hard down if inadvertently let go. Extra springs in the UP direction are required.
10. Plastic seal strips forward of the flap component of the flapperons are missing from both wings.
11. ASI went backwards during take-off roll. I continued anyway. ASI settled down in the negative direction to the 130 knot position but did not move during acceleration or deceleration until coming in to land when the airspeed was clearly reduced. Altitude indication was meaningless the whole trip, Aspen kept dropping in and out. Flight hour meter did not work. Dynon showed no airspeed or altitude. I suggest all of this was due to the pitot static system hook up, probably reversed.
12. KR-86 ADF can't be tuned - can't rotate tuning knob fully.
13. In flight amps reads 0 down to -2 amps.
14. Both dimmer knobs need tightening.

Other than the above the aircraft flew well. It was impossible to check performance with no airspeed readout available. Total flight time 1.0 hour, Moorabbin to West Sale.



Flashback



Cliff Tait (right) and reporter John Shattock (eating a banana) somewhere over Indonesia on a ferry flight, with a Kiwi-ingenuity heatshield (and amateur radio equipment). *Photo from Water Under My Wings by Cliff Tait.*

Members Only Offer!



Punkin Head Air Sports are offering Airtourer Association members a 5% discount on all canopy, propeller and pitot/intake covers for Airtourers and CT-4s. Dianne has the patterns for all models, and can provide covers in different materials and weights. Phone Dianne on 0429 938 426



or visit www.punkinheadair.com.au



Mission Accomplished Aborted

by Ric Davies (Victa Airtourer VH-RIC)

Probably a year in the planning, to fly coastal from home to Port Augusta and on to our daughter's before Warbirds over Scone. Then teeing up lots of details in the couple of months leading up to departure, including hangarage at Tamworth for RIC while we went on down to Warbirds over Scone then home on the Burner and back for the AGM.

Mmmmm. Well, we achieved departure from Tandara pre-sunrise to lob at Jandakot by 8am local, meet an instructor mate and do a quick refresher in and out of controlled airspace a couple of times coz I haven't "Been In" since about 2002!!!



A couple of days in Perth until departure day arrives and the WA south coast is clagged in, but forecast to clear early arvo. So we started some planning, and it turns out Bunbury is closed for two days to all aircraft!

Re-plan fuel and it turns out for every other bowser in the south west you have to have a BP card.

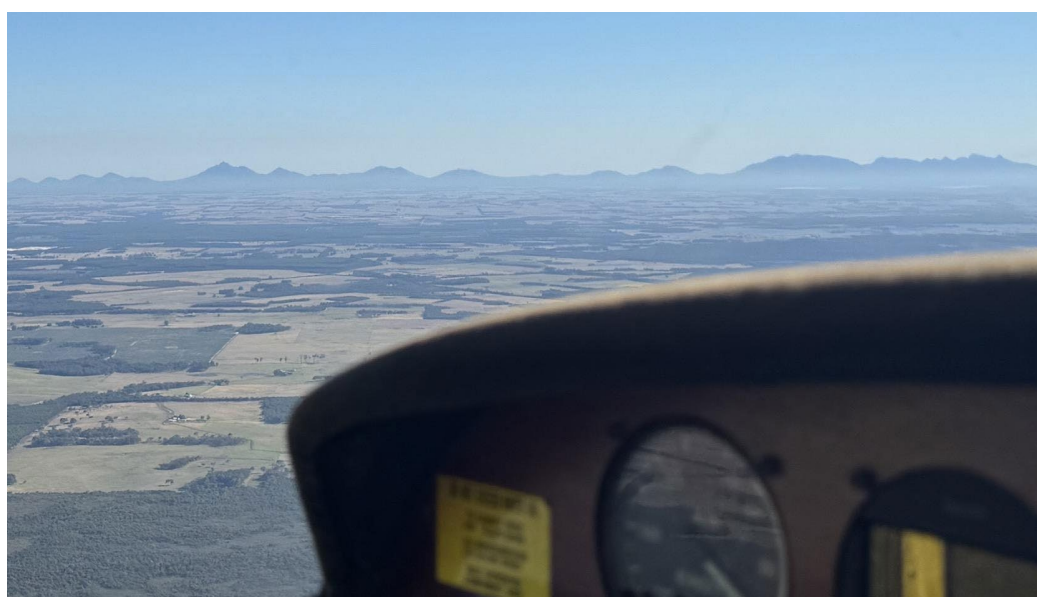
So, back to Jandakot, get a temporary card, and off we go coastal to Albany. Couple of days with Veronica's Dad. At this point our daughter near Tibooburra has another significant rain event and won't be able to get off the station for a week at least to



pick us up. Oh yeah, also cyclone Narelle was unpredictable, and possibly coming down the middle of the country somewhere, etc, etc. What to do?



It's supposed to be a holiday and I am not a "braviator". And I don't like the thought of my lovely little aeroplane sitting out on some lonely airstrip in the elements. With mixed feelings, we decided to call it off and go home via Esperance. The forecast for departure was great, and as we made ready for departure, a local returned warning that fog is rolling in from the west. By the time we saddled up it was close so we made an early right turn and just snuck out under it. Beaut flight to Esperance and smoko with friends, then about four hours home. *Let's hope we get a little further in May.*



Ripper Photo!

Mike Jorgensen has a great combination of flying and photographing skills, so it is no surprise that he has dug up an amazing selfie from the RNZAF part of his career!



After the RNZAF, Mike spent a decade flying much larger aircraft (C-130 and VC-10 tankers) in the Royal Air Force.



Dealing with an in-flight emergency in the connected era

by **Doug Gould** (Victa Airtourer 160 VH-CTM)

This article was triggered by watching an American Bonanza Society Youtube video that is a panel discussion with Martin Pauly, who is well known to most pilots who frequent Youtube.

The video is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUC8MEbEq6w&t=2965s>. Or search on “Dealing with an in-flight emergency Martin Pauly on YouTube.”

The video analyses an in-flight emergency that Martin had with the landing gear in his Bonanza. It resonates with my own experience with landing gear on approach to Bourke in an IFR pressurised Aerostar. It’s a very pragmatic real world review of an emergency that has lessons for us all.

Martin’s flight started out as a post-maintenance check flight. On return he selected gear down, but didn’t get any green lights. There was no panic, just “On no, now it’s happened to me, what do I do next”. I’ve had the experience.

Martin got to a good altitude and engaged the autopilot and got out the checklist. We pretty much did the same in my incident except that we were 2 pilot ops.

The Bonanza checklist didn’t cover Martin’s issue. Martin talks about looking to see if there were pages stuck together in an effort to find the checklist that addressed his issue. We had the same experience over Bourke, a moment of disbelief that the flight manual and checklists wouldn’t help us.

I’ve had three emergencies. None were covered by the emergency check lists. This is where the real world knowledge of specific aircraft systems kicks in. This is where all those afternoons drinking beer in the hangar talking about flying finally show a benefit.

For a minute it’s worth imagining the guys in an air-conditioned meeting room making up the emergency checklists required for certification. Was their objective really to solve your problem, or get past a certification hurdle? The world has changed in terms of communication since then. The checklists were not created with the benefit of experience we now have in what goes wrong in the real world. The modern connected world has many advantages beyond emergency checklists. It gives you access to a wide range of other people’s experience.

This first lesson is that you almost certainly have more time than you think. It’s easy to get carried away with the urgency of an emergency. Once you are above an airport, you can burn nearly all the fuel you have. There is time to calm down and think



through the situation. The first thing is to get altitude and go somewhere that you can fly orbits for a while. We did orbits over Bourke for around an hour. We orbited while we did the checklists on an IFR flight plan trying to avoid declaring the situation to ATC. We orbited while we tried all the things we had heard about. We orbited while we rang our check and training guy. We orbited while we finally went through everything with ATC and discussed whether to call out “the services”. We orbited while we spoke to an aircraft on the ground, then did a fly-by and we orbited while we waited for the services to arrive. By the time we finished orbiting we cared less about how we actually arrived on the ground!

Just a quick note on declaring emergencies. Some time ago there was a lot of debate about how to declare an emergency. But Capt Sullenberger never declared an emergency when he landed in the Hudson River. I’ve had an engine failure on take-off, a fuel emergency that required a divert to Adelaide International which put all airline traffic in a holding pattern and the gear incident over Bourke, but in none of them did I actually use the mayday phrase. The engine incident simply didn’t have time. I wasn’t talking with anyone. The other two (and probably more typical of modern emergencies) were creeping situations. In each case ATC had full knowledge of what was going on and they became effective partners suggesting to us when it was appropriate to move to a declared emergency.

In the words of Gene Kranz, flight director of Apollo 13, “ just work the problem”.

When most of our aircraft were built they had a single AWA skyphone radio. In the modern era when we fly we typically have multiple VHF radios (maybe even a portable), a mobile phone with voice and text messages and, frequently, Internet. This was never envisaged by the writers of the emergency checklists of our aircraft (and certainly not CASA!).

In Martin Pauly's instance, he started phoning his LAME, then progressed to calling the American Bonanza Society technical experts. In my instance, we ran the checklists, then called our check and training instructor and spoke with local traffic on radio.

In Martin Pauly’s case he got a suggestion from a lateral thinking technical advisor that got the gear down and enabled a normal landing.

Martin Pauly’s video highlights that you need to be prepared to think widely in an emergency and use all your options to seek advice. One of the benefits of groups like the American Bonanza Association and our own Airtourer Association is the ability to connect with technical experts and other experienced pilots.

In my case the issue was a landing light failure caused by a dry solder joint done at recent maintenance, so ultimately, we landed uneventfully. For those who might be interested, when you request “the services” at Bourke, that translates to three fire trucks, three SES vehicles, two Ambulances and three police cars. All those sirens on a nice sunny Sunday morning were a touch embarrassing, although everyone involved was very supportive and pleased to have come out.



When I started flying in 1973 headsets were rare. I bought my first David Clark's on my honeymoon from Aircraft Spruce in LA in 1985. Now headsets are basically mandatory and are typically active noise cancelling with Bluetooth. A headset connected to a mobile phone with Bluetooth gives you lots of options for assistance. This article started with a landing gear episode. Our Airtourer are unlikely to experience these issues. But almost all Airtourer are flown VFR. Access to someone on the ground who is thinking calmly with good Internet and a proper search can be a massive assistance in marginal VFR. They can look at rain radars, weather forecasts, METARs and weather cams. They can maybe call Met briefing more easily. This gives you a wonderful partner to research and suggest options that you hadn't considered in the heat of the moment and help get you through.

We are flying with access to a wide range of support and advisors. And the Bluetooth headset we bought to listen to music enroute is maybe a more significant safety device than we had considered. It's worth watching the American Bonanza Society / Martin Pauly video and contemplating how it might change what you would do in an emergency.

Doug Rosenthal in the ABS video sums up saying that in an emergency if you have fuel and a mobile phone, then you have resources. Don't give up until you have exhausted all your resources.

Puzzle Solution:

John Wynn and Keith Buttrey flew a Victa 100 from Bendigo to London so that they could compete in the England to Australia Air Race to commemorate 50 years since the 1919 Air Race won by Keith and Ross Smith in a Vickers Vimy. On their way, they took lots of amazing pictures during their adventure.

Photo 1 Answer: Mt Vesuvius, north of Naples.

Photo 2 Answer. Mt Etna.

Approaching an overfly of Araxos for Catania Mt Etna above Catania in Sicily.



Flashback

Last pilots pass out of Point Cook

Naval pilot training at the RAAF's No1 Flying Training School (IFTS) has come to an end with the graduation of the last three naval trainees to learn their basic flying skills at the school.

Virtually all currently serving naval pilots began their aviation careers at Point Cook, flying the CT4 Airtrainer or its predecessor, the Winjeel, before proceeding to advanced training.

Future naval pilots will train at RAAF Pearce in Western Australia on the Pilatus PC9 having successfully completed flight grading at a civilian flying school in Tamworth, NSW.

Pictured left are the naval staff and the final naval students at IFTS.

Standing from left: Instructors Lieutenants Greg Wilson and Bruce Stevenson, Senior Naval Officer Lieutenant Commander Tony Nelson and Chief Petty Officer Terry Wilkinson; front: students, Sub-Lieutenant Marcus MacGregor, Midshipman Paul Ford and Midshipman Anson Needham.



Airtruk!

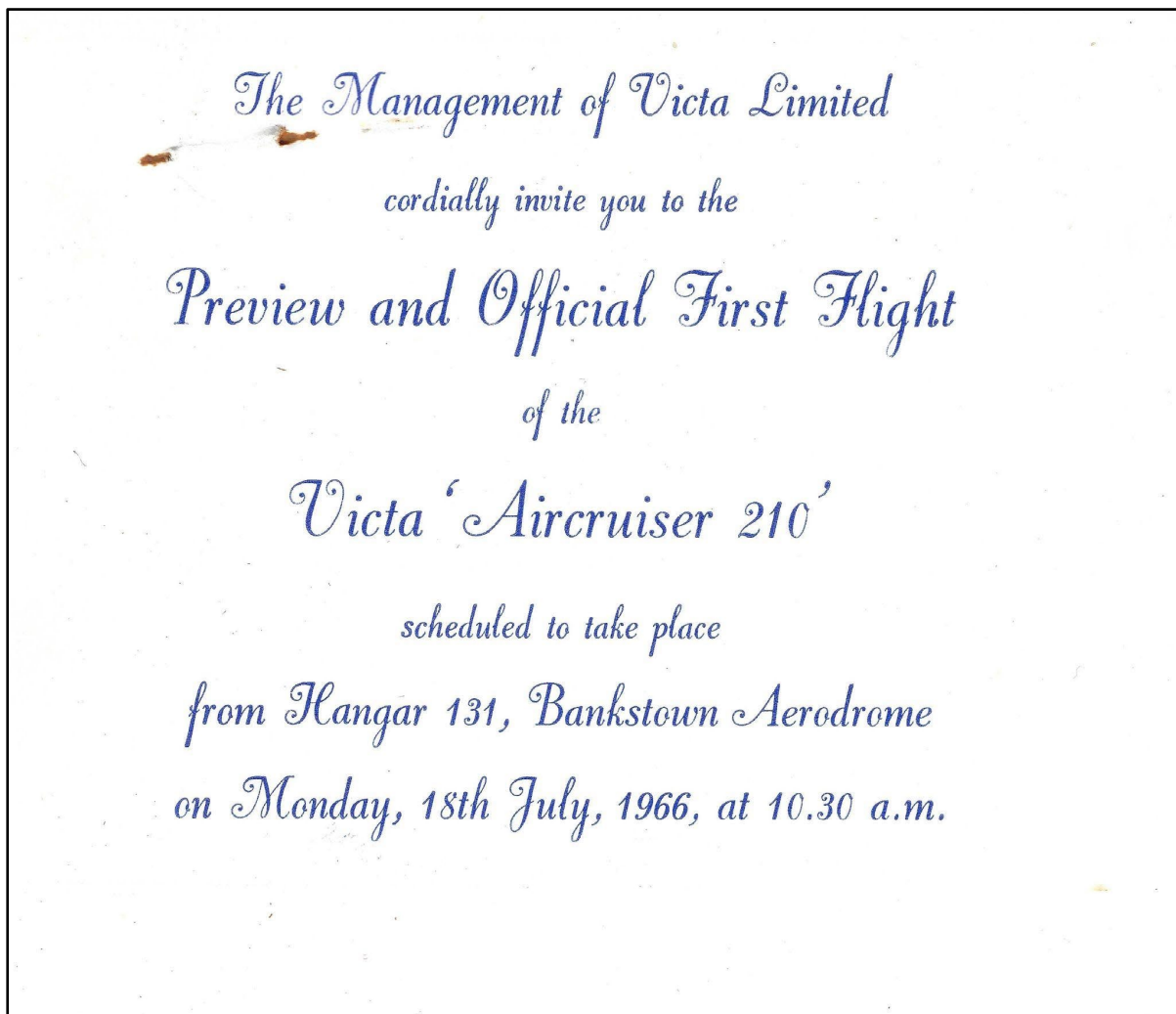
The January 2026 edition of the Newsletter featured a fantastic cover shot of a Royal Thai Air Force CT-4E, courtesy of the Spinner Team of photographers in Thailand. Realising the connection, Napapol from Spinners has sent through a photo of a Royal Thai Agricultural Air Division (KASET) Transavia Airtruk on display at the Royal Rainmaking Centre, Hua Hin Airport, in Thailand. KASET operated 14 Airtruk!!



And while on the subject of Thailand, here's a photo that popped up of an Airtourer T6/24 in Thailand with a Pilatus Turbo-Porter providing the backdrop.



From the Archive



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